GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4995
ANSWERED ON:26.04.2000
INCREASE IN H1- B VISA CAP
BASUDEB ACHARIA;VILAS BABURAO MUTTEMWAR

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India took up the matter of H1-B visa cap with the American President, Bill Clinton, during the latter`s visit to India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the American Government thereto;

(d) whether a number of Indians are suffering due to the dishonest practices pertaining to the issuance of H1-B visas; and

(e) if so, the manner in which the Government propose to tackle this issue?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a) During the recent visit of President Clinton to India, discussions were held on a wide range of issues of mutual interest including cooperation in field of hi-technology. However, there was no specific discussion on increase in H1-B Visa Cap.

(b) & (c) Do not arise.

(d) & (e) No instances have been brought to the notice of the Ministry of External Affairs regarding suffering of Indians due to dishonest practices pertaining to the issuance of H1-B visas. There was, however, the case of Indian computer professionals who were arrested in Texas in January 2000 by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service of USA, for alleged violation of their employment terms under the H1-B visa, by working for a company other than the one listed on their labour certificates. They were released the next day after the company that hired them - M/s Frontier Consulting Inc. executed bonds for their release.On that occasion, the Ambassador of India in Washington lodged a strong protest with the State Department over the arrests of the Indian nationals. The Assistant Secretary of the State Department expressed deep regret on this incident on behalf of the US Government.All charges against the Indian professionals were subsequently dropped.